

February 7, 2023

Dear Fellowship Committee,

I am writing in support of Angelica Palmer's application to the ACWC's Rural and Traditional Arts Fellowship, describing *The Cherry Valley Water Project*. I see great value in the goals of this project, as Angelica seeks to foster community connection to our headwater stream, the Cherry Valley Creek. I write as a community member, but also as a professional in the field of environmental science and education.

My professional work revolves around lake and watershed science, educating and sharing scientific research with the communities that are drawn to waterfronts, primarily lakes and ponds. People with a direct connection to the waters are often the most passionate about the stewardship of them. When I read about *The Cherry Valley Water Project* I knew instantly that I wanted to get involved in some way; I have committed to working with Angelica to generate maps of the watershed for use in workshops and as online resources.

A major draw of this project is the very creative way that it seeks to reach individuals, through poetry and storytelling, to establish emotional connections in a positive atmosphere – so often our scientific reasons for conservation are rooted in negativity – this approach allows people to contemplate their connections to this waterway with a sense of wonder and hopefulness.

I have worked for many years in support of organizations across New York State as they attempt to protect the waterbodies they cherish, but never in my own community. In my experience, connection and awareness of the creek can lead to active conservation efforts. I also hope that an additional outcome of this project will be to inspire a sense of stewardship with downstream communities in mind. The water leaving our rural headwater community flows onward to become the waters of downstream communities, eventually to the Chesapeake Bay.

Sincerely,



Holly Waterfield

Research Support Specialist  
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Town Councilperson  
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Certified Lake Manager  
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